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Serial No.: 10/779,373
Amendment Dated September 29, 2005
Reply to Office action of July 5, 2005.

REMARKS

In the Office Action of July 5, 2005, claims 1-15 were rejected and claims 16-26 were indicated as withdrawn from consideration. In this response, the applicants have amended claims 1, 3, 8 and 10 and canceled claims 2 and 9. Accordingly, claims 1, 3-8, and 10-15 remain pending in this application. The drawings have been amended in order to correct for the missing reference character.

Amendments to the Drawings

The drawings have been amended to remove reference character 240, which was included in the original drawings to refer to an adhesive layer. The amended replacement drawing sheet is attached.

35 U.S.C. § 102(b) Rejections

The Examiner rejected claims 1-5 and 7-14 under U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Terasaki et al., US 6,432,516 (hereinafter "the '516 reference"). The Examiner also rejected claims 1-14 under U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Graff et al., US 6,492,026 (hereinafter "the '026 reference"). The rejection of claims 1-14 is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 2. Claim 8 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 9. Claims 2 and 9 have been canceled. Claims 3 and 10 have been amended to correct for their dependency. Amended claims 1 and 8 now recite a composite article comprising a substrate layer and a diffusion-inhibiting barrier disposed on a surface of the substrate layer, wherein at least one diffusion-inhibiting barrier comprises a material, the composition of which varies across a thickness thereof.

Neither Terasaki et al. nor Graff et al. disclose or suggest this limitation on the composition gradient of the diffusion-inhibiting layer in the composite article. The '516 reference teaches for example, multilayer films with alternating sublayers of thin oxide layers and polymeric layers (column 7, lines 57-61). There is, however, no teaching nor

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suggestion in the '516 reference or '026 reference that would lead one skilled in the art to conclude that it would be advantageous to use a diffusion-inhibiting barrier such that the concentration of the diffusion-inhibiting barrier varies across its thickness, as recited in amended claim 1.

Because neither the '516 reference nor the '026 reference discloses or suggests each and every limitation of the claimed invention, the Applicants respectfully submit that the amended claims 1 and 8 are patentable over the cited references, and the remaining claims depend from an allowable claim.

35 U.S.C. § 102(a) Rejections

The Examiner rejected claims 1-5 and 7-15 under U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Silvermail et al., US 6,576,351 (hereinafter "the '351 reference"). The rejection of claims 1-5 and 7-15 is respectfully traversed.

Generally, Applicants note that Silvermail et al. do not teach a composite article comprising a diffusion-barrier layer wherein the composition of the diffusion-barrier layer varies across its thickness. Because the '351 reference neither discloses nor suggests each and every limitation of the claimed invention, amended claims 1 and 8 are believed to be in condition for allowance for at least the reasons summarized above with respect to amended claims 1 and 8, and their dependent claims.

35 U.S.C. § 102(e) Rejections

The Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 6-11, 13 and 14 under U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Chung et al., US 6,836,070 (hereinafter "the '070 reference").

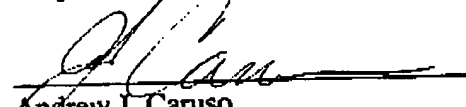
Generally, Applicants note that Chung et al. do not teach a composite article comprising a diffusion-barrier layer wherein the composition of the diffusion-barrier layer varies across its thickness. Because the '070 reference neither discloses nor suggests each and every limitation of the claimed invention, amended claims 1 and 8 are believed to be in condition for allowance for at least the reasons summarized above with respect to amended claims 1 and 8, and their dependent claims.

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In view of the foregoing remarks, the Applicants believe that each of claims 1, 3-8, and 10-15 are now in condition for allowance. The Applicants thus courteously solicit a review of the proposed amendments and prompt allowance of these claims. Should the Examiner believe that anything further is needed to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,


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